

THE NEW YORK HERALD.

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NEW YORK, MONDAY, MAY 26, 1862.

PRICE TWO CENTS.

IMPORTANT FROM GEN. BANKS.

The Attack of the Rebels Jackson and Ewell on His Column.

Official Despatches from General Banks.

STRENGTH OF THE REBELS.

Operations Previous to the Attack.

BANKS FALLS BACK ON MARTINSBURG.

The Disaster to Col. Kenly's Regiment.

THE REBEL PREPARATIONS.

General Banks' Official Report.

General Banks' Official Report.

The rebels attacked on this morning at daylight in great force. Their force was estimated at 15,000, consisting of Ewell's and Jackson's divisions. The fire of the pickets began with the light, and was followed by the artillery until the lines were fully under fire on both sides. The left wing stood firmly, holding its ground well, and the right did the same for a time, when two regiments broke under the fire of the enemy.

The right wing fell back and were ordered to withdraw, and the troops passed through the town in considerable confusion. They were quickly reformed on the other side, and continued their march in good order to Martinsburg, where they arrived at twenty minutes to three P. M., a distance of twenty-two miles.

Our trains are in advance and will cross the river in safety. Our entire force engaged was less than four thousand, consisting of Gordon's and Donnelly's brigades, with two regiments of cavalry under General Hatch, and two batteries of artillery.

Our loss was considerable, as was that of the enemy, but cannot now be stated. We were reinforced by the Fifteenth Maine, which did good service, and a regiment of cavalry.

N. P. BANKS, Major General Commanding.

The Details of the Engagements.

General Banks' Official Report.

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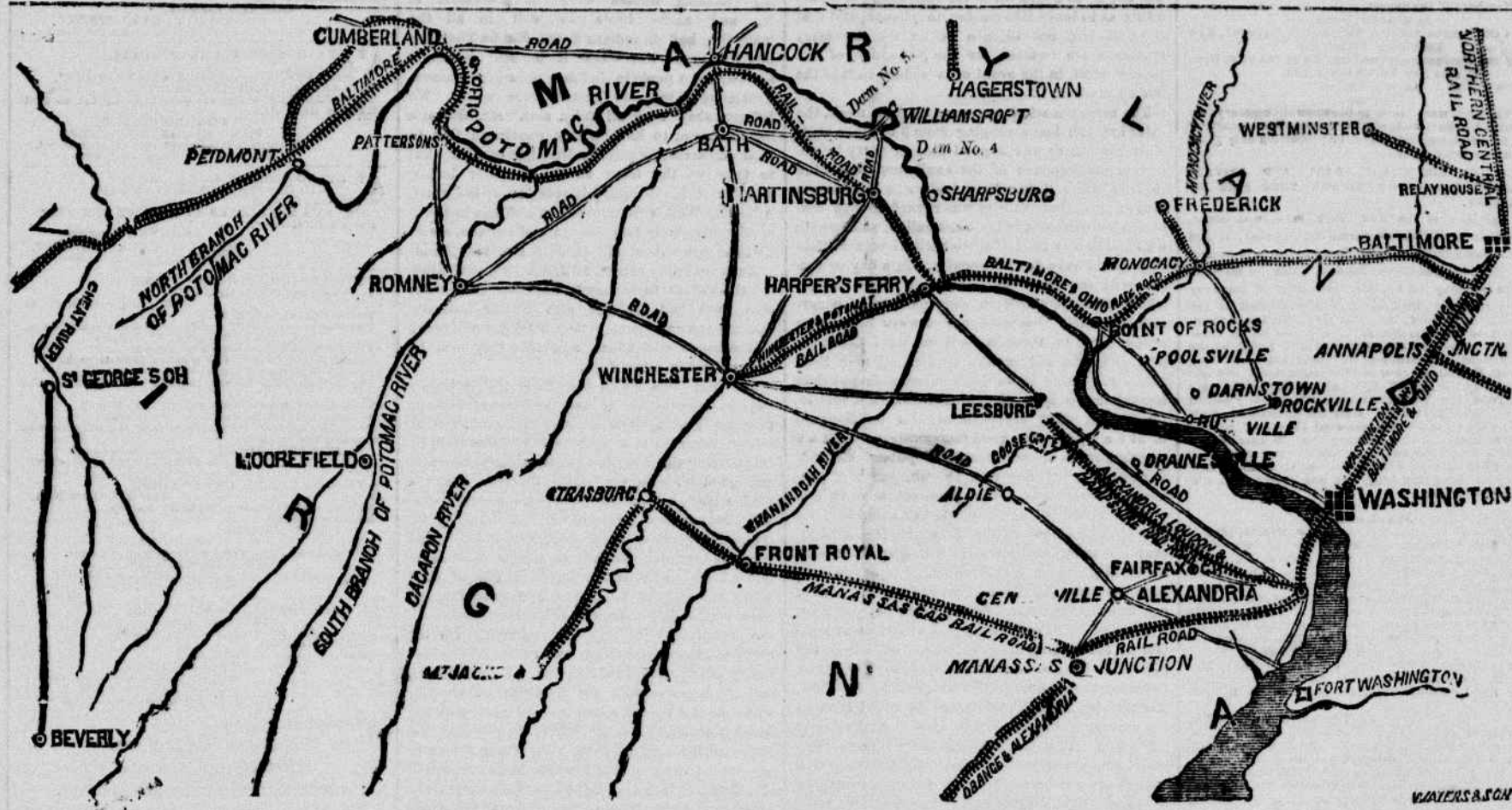
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THE REBEL ATTACK ON BANKS' COLUMN.

Scene of the Operations of the Rebel Generals Jackson and Ewell on Front Royal and Winchester, May 24 and 25, 1862.



Base of the Blue Ridge, on the western side, and it is within supporting distance from Johnson's column in the vicinity of Gordonsville. The position is well selected, and which it is highly probable he will defend, is an indentation or alcove at the base or in the side of the range of mountains known as Swift Run Gap. From this circumstance you can readily perceive that it will be next to an impossibility to flank him, and that the only manner in which he can be defeated is by some strategy which will draw him from the mountain position. There is an inferior road leading from Harrisonburg to Stauntonville on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge, which passes through the rebel camp and by a wooden bridge over the south or main fork of the Shenandoah. As it is nine miles from the bridge to Jackson's headquarters, before our troops could cross the river in any force and attack the enemy he will have ample time to guard against a surprise. A glance at the map of Virginia, which was published in the Herald some time ago, will give a clearer idea of the position than any further verbal account can do. The roads are in good condition, the telegraph line has been completed as far as Mount Jackson, and the weather is fine and highly favorable to the campaign.

This town was started yesterday by a report that the rebel army was advancing upon us. General Banks was promptly upon the alert, and everything was prepared to give him battle.

The night passed off quietly, however, and every one is of the opinion that as soon as something definite is heard from Yorktown this column will immediately advance across the Blue Ridge.

The Rebels in Force in the Mountains—A Narrow Escape—The Guerrillas, &c.

Across the Shenandoah Mountains the enemy still maintains a large camp. In a skirmish over there, which occurred yesterday, about thirty of the Indians, which were on a foraging expedition, and before they were aware of any danger they suddenly discovered themselves surrounded on their front and flanks by infantry and cavalry of the enemy. Perceiving their situation, they dashed back towards the river, firing their carbines and pistols in retreat. The Shenandoah at that point is deep and rapid. Nothing daunted, however, the cavalry dashed their horses into the stream and effected their escape by swimming the river, and returned to their camp without losing a man. The only mishap was the shooting of the chaplain's horse. This adventure was a lesson of caution to our cavalry which was not unavailing.

The weather is warm and fine. This change is fully appreciated, so wet and gloomy has been the winter and earlier spring. Fine weather, when it is not too warm, is an advantage anywhere; but nowhere so much is it appreciated as in a military camp. The army in this department may be said to be quietly resting on its arms at present, though it is co-operating with the other columns of the Army of the Potomac by holding at least an equal force of the rebels detached to counteract it.

There is a party of one hundred guerrillas between Winchester and Strasburg, and it is evident we will have some guerrilla pests all through this valley. Vigorous measures are taken to stop them, however, and one of them was arrested yesterday, near Strasburg, and forwarded to Winchester jail, where he has since lodged. No punishment could be too severe for these infamous and murderous vagabonds. Some of them are supposed to be deserters from Jackson's column.

Front Royal, Va., May 15, 1862.

Moments of Gen. Shields' Division—The March to Strasburg—The Reported Strength of the Rebels Under Ewell—General Shields and Gen. Banks' Forces Withdrawn from General Banks' Command, &c.

The division of General Shields arrived here yesterday about breakfast time. It left Newmarket on Monday last, and marched to Strasburg, arriving there some afternoon. The march was quite interesting, for we had to pass the division of the rebel General Ewell, who, it was hoped, would dispute our passage. The enemy's pickets retired on our approach, however, and though the mountain passes and woods on the line of march afforded excellent defensive positions, the rebel general had not temerity sufficient to induce him to risk an encounter with the Union forces. The numbers of the rebels under Ewell are reported by five officers of the Union army, who escaped through the rebel lines from imprisonment at Richmond, to be about ten thousand men.

The day was fine during the march, and everything went on well. We passed through a considerable district of farm country, where we had the pleasure of meeting many Union people. The ladies, dressed in their best habiliments, when they heard of our approach, sang the national patriotic airs as the army moved past. These scenes, though they may appear trifling, not only have their significance, but are cheering and interesting to our gallant troops. This rebel, on the other hand, remained mute and apparently unconcerned. As a general rule the rebels in this district admit that their cause is hopelessly lost, and they now fall back on the cry that the war was unnecessary, and South Carolina had no right to commence it. Some of them expressed a hope that the North would deal mercifully with the South, and not require her to pay the whole expense of the war. A few were of opinion, or at least affected

to be of the opinion, that the falling back of the rebels and the recent succession of disasters which have occurred to them are only the policy of the rebel generals to defeat the government army.

On Tuesday the division marched from Luray to Millford, the weather still continuing fine. Nothing of different character from the scenes of the first day's march occurred on Tuesday. Before the break of day yesterday our division was again in motion, and reached here at the time mentioned in the beginning of this letter. A new regulation was introduced during this march by General Shields. It was that the knapsacks and blankets should be drawn along by the men on their backs through a hot sun, over a bad and dusty road. The consequence was that the men were very little fatigued by the marching, and accomplished their journey with comparative ease. The column is on its way to join McDowell's command, while the division of Gen. Williams guards the valley by holding Strasburg, which is regarded as the "key" to its possession. (Our division is now considered amply sufficient for that purpose. Shields' division goes forward by railroad from here to-day. Since our arrival here the weather has been wet and disagreeable.

General Shields' Command—The Rebels Advancing—The Work Accomplished by General Banks' Command—Our Force Divided—The Rebels Concentrated—General Banks in Direct Communication with the Capital, &c.

The rear guard of General Shields' division left here, and resumed its march to Frederickburg. The place has remained in its former quietude, and the change in this respect wrought by the departure of the troops is quite remarkable.

Two days ago Johnson and Jackson, the rebel generals in the valley, united their forces with those of the rebel General Ewell, and encamped around Harrisonburg. It is now reported that they are advancing towards Strasburg, slowly and steadily, and, according to one statement, they are already as far as Edinburg. It is so they will probably try to overpower General Banks' command at Strasburg.

A good deal of useful work has been done by General Geary's command, and since he took charge of the railroad from here to Manassas Junction, not only has the road been repaired and the bridge over it rebuilt, but it has been guarded for upwards of fifty miles against attacks from guerrillas and other roving parties of the enemy. The bridge built over the Shenandoah alone at this point is a work of great labor. Its length is 450 feet. The first train will pass over it to-day to Strasburg, and thus the road will be open throughout its entire length.

Guerrilla bands and detached parties of the enemy, mostly in the section. A company of these men attacked our men protecting the railroad at a point eight miles below Front Royal, two nights ago, killing one man, wounding another and taking prisoners. These are our troops protecting the railroad constantly subject to night attacks from desperate and unscrupulous free rebels. They are spread out in small parties, while the rebels can bring a larger force to bear on them at any single point.

The opening of the railroad from Alexandria to Strasburg will be advantageous in many ways. In the first place it will strengthen Banks' command by opening direct and rapid communication between his headquarters and the capital. It will strengthen our hold on the valley of Virginia, and it will facilitate and increase the frequency of mail communication between this division of the army and the country in general.

The strength of the enemy's forces in the valley at present is about twenty-five to thirty thousand men. Two divisions are about their way here from there yesterday. They belonged to Ewell's column. Their report is that Jackson has been ordered to retreat southward with the rest of the rebel forces, but that he has expressed the determination to die in defense of Virginia, and Virginia alone. They also report that his army would not accompany him to the cotton States even if he was willing to go there; and as it is he has to keep extra guards on duty every night to prevent thousands of his command from rushing to their homes, which are now within the Union lines.

The Rebel Preparations.

From the Richmond Examiner, April 23. Republished from the New York Herald of May 1.]

The clouds of war thicken each moment. The enemy are pouring large forces into the valley of the Rappahannock from several directions. McClellan is reported to have despatched a body of troops up the Rappahannock from the bay to reinforce McDowell's division at Frederickburg. A citizen of Fauquier, who arrived yesterday, reports a large army as advancing from Warrenton. General Jackson is said to have fallen back from the valley to Gordonsville, before Banks, who follows after him with a column of about thirty thousand men. If Banks and McDowell should combine their divisions, which is probably their purpose, Richmond would be threatened from the direction of the Potomac with sixty thousand men.

Our government has ordered heavy reinforcements to meet these approaching columns, and it is very probable that a decisive battle may be fought north of Richmond before that the Peninsula has been evacuated. Our best fighting generals have pursued the policy of giving the enemy a fierce fight before falling back under the pressure of superior forces. This was the tactics of Jackson at Winchester, and if he is let alone, will doubtless be his tactics again before falling back behind the line of the Chickahominy.

The effort of the enemy will doubtless be to effect a junction of his forces under Banks and McDowell somewhere in the county of Louisa or Caroline. We suppose it will be necessary for General Jackson to withdraw until he can get both of these columns in his front. This done, the instincts of the man will, doubtless, induce him to offer a battle. Our position is on the Chickahominy, and our allies somewhere in the county of Louisa or Caroline. We should not be surprised at hearing within a week of a fierce battle on this advanced position, wherever it may be.

We augur well for the result of any engagement that may come off in that region of country. The enemy will be far from his water base of operations. He will be compelled to meet us on equal terms in every respect except his superior numbers, and we can manage pretty heavy odds of these. A soldier accounted in a soldier's satisfactory way for our yielding at last in one of our most important battles. He said we whipped them the best part of the time, and as long as we could fight, and we should have whipped them all the time if they had not been reinforced until there was no end to them. They are the better of us on the second day at Shiloh.

This process of "out reinforcing" us, which they apply to the river enabled them to do. If they come upon us as far as Caroline or Louisa they will be "out reinforced" from their water transportation, that is, by the "out reinforcing" will be impracticable. We augur well for the result of any engagement that may come off in that region of country. The enemy will be far from his water base of operations. He will be compelled to meet us on equal terms in every respect except his superior numbers, and we can manage pretty heavy odds of these. A soldier accounted in a soldier's satisfactory way for our yielding at last in one of our most important battles. He said we whipped them the best part of the time, and as long as we could fight, and we should have whipped them all the time if they had not been reinforced until there was no end to them. They are the better of us on the second day at Shiloh.

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The News in the City.

Great Excitement of the People.

Sunday seems to be a marked day in this rebellion. Eight out of every ten batties that have been fought during the war have taken place on the Sabbath, and the next of almost every other battle has arrived here just in time for Sunday's paper, or at such an hour as to render the issue of a Sunday extra necessary. This singular coincidence has been frequently noticed by the generals commanding our armies, the editors of papers, and clergymen in their pulpits. War is evidently no respecter of the seventh day of rest and peace, the ferocious abolition screaming persons to the contrary notwithstanding, and men will seem to shoot and stab and mangle each other on Sunday, as well as any other day, without stopping to consider the sanctity of the occasion.

Yesterday we had another Sunday sensation. People had returned from morning services, and were about to sit down complacently to their dinners, when the noise of the members shouting out "The Defeat of General Banks!" startled them from their easy chairs, and summoned them to the street doors to purchase a paper containing the unlooked for intelligence. The news circulated through the city, as all had news, with the wings of lightning. The newsmen were all over the city in a few hours, and extras were bought up at the most fabulous prices. The excitement, as will readily be supposed, was intense, and increased every hour, the most feverish anxiety existing to learn full particulars of the disaster. A rumor to the effect that the militia of this and neighboring States had been notified to hold themselves in readiness to march to the defense of the national capital naturally heightened the effect of the news from Virginia, and gave rise to the fear that Washington was in danger of being captured by the enemy. Down town crowds beset the newspaper offices, and the appearance of things greatly resembled the early days of the rebellion. The disaster, coming so soon on the heels of so many glorious victories, caused the shock to be felt all the greater by the people, who were ill prepared for the reception of bad tidings.

The Latest News.

Headquarters, Beyond Martinsburg, May 25—4:45 P. M.

A prisoner, captured this afternoon, says the rebel force in our rear is to be strengthened; that their purpose is to enter Maryland at two points—Harper's Ferry and Williamsport. He confirms all we have heard in regard to the rebel force here.

We all pass the Potomac safe—men, trains and all. I think of making a march of thirty-five miles.

N. P. BANKS, Major General Commanding.

Important from North Carolina.

Reported Capture of Raleigh, the Capital of the State.

Headquarters, Beyond Martinsburg, May 25, 1862.

The Old Point boat has arrived. Our news letter has not yet come to hand. It is reported that Gen. Burnside has taken Raleigh, N. C.

The Ellen S. Terry arrived from Newbern this afternoon, with some thirty wounded men.

The American flag was raised in Raleigh some three or four days ago by the citizens. No particulars had been received. The news arrived by flag of truce.

On day before yesterday a party, consisting of two companies of North Carolina cavalry and one company of infantry, visited Swift Creek, twelve miles from Newbern, where a Union meeting had recently been held, and arrested several Union men, taking them away with them. One of the men, who was very loud in his expression of Union sentiments, was taken into the woods by the enemy, where his throat was cut, and where he was afterwards found by our troops.

A reconnaissance was made to Clinton, thirteen miles south of Newbern, a few days since. The enemy's advanced pickets were found and a skirmish ensued. We lost one lieutenant and four privates, taken prisoners. We left nine of the enemy's dead on the field, and took two prisoners.

The health and spirits of the troops at Newbern continue excellent.

Washington, N. C., has been occupied and a newspaper started there by the troops.

The Fire at Lancaster.

Scrutiny, Pa., May 25, 1862.

INTERESTING FROM GEN. McCLELLAN.

The Lively and Successful Skirmish at New Bridge.

Advance of Our Troops on Richmond.

McC